

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

INFO AMEMBASSY BANJUL

SECSTATE WASHDC 7264

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINR, SL, LI

SUBJECT: NEW LIBERIAN AMBASSADOR TO SIERRA LEONE (JOSEPH G. MORRIS)

1. IN NOVEMBER 1977 JOSEPH GENEYMEL MORRIS WAS COMMISSIONED AS LIBERIA'S NEW AMBASSADOR TO SIERRA LEONE AND THE GAMBIA. HE WILL BE RESIDENT IN FREETOWN.

2. MORRIS WAS BORN NOVEMBER 6, 1929 IN GBARNGA, BONG COUNTY. HIS FATHER, KEAMU GAYNE, WAS A KPELLE CLAN CHIEF. MORRIS, HOWEVER, WAS "ADOPTED" INTO THE PROMINENT MORRIS FAMILY OF KAKATA, GIBI TERRITORY, A WEALTHY SETTLER FAMILY WITH MANY TIES TO THE UNITED STATES.

3. THE POSITING TO FREETOWN IS MORRIS' FIRST DIPLOMATIC ASSIGNMENT. ALTHOUGH HE HAS ATTENDED UNESCO CONFERENCES AS A MEMBER OF THE LIBERIAN DELEGATION. HIS PREVIOUS CAREER WAS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION WHERE HE EARNED A NAME FOR HIMSELF AS ONE OF LIBERIA'S MOST TALENTED ADMINISTRATORS. HE HAS SERVED AS DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION FOR INSTRUCTION (1976-77); ASSISTANT MINISTER OF EDUCATION FOR INSTRUCTION (1970-76); DIRECTOR OF TEACHER EDUCATION (1959-65); DIRECTOR

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OF IN SERVICE EDUCATION (1958); EDUCATIONAL AIDE TO EXTENSION EDUCATION SPECIALIST (1955-58); AND AS A SCHOOL TEACHER IN MONROVIA AND CAREYSBURG (1955-57). MORRIS ALSO WAS AT ONE TIME A SERGEANT IN THE MILITIA AND WORKED BRIEFLY AS A JUNIOR ACCOUNTANT AT THE BANK OF LIBERIA. IN MANY OF HIS POSITIONS AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION MORRIS WORKED CLOSELY WITH USAID OFFICIALS

WHO HAD HIGH REGARD FOR HIS INTELLIGENCE, COMPETENCE AND INTEGRITY. HE WORKS WELL WITH AMERICANS AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVELY PRO-AMERICAN. MORRIS LEFT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION IN MID-1977 IN ORDER TO RUN FOR THE SENATE FROM BONG COUNTY AND TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE PROMOTION OF PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S DAUGHTER TO DEPUTY MINISTER FOR INSTRUCTION. MORRIS' LACKLUSTER CAMPAIGN FOR THE SENATE WAS UNSUCCESSFUL AND AS A CONSOLATION PRIZE OF SORTS, HE WAS NAMED AMBASSADOR.

4. UNDER USAID SPONSORSHIP, MORRIS STUDIED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN (M.ED IN SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION, 1958) AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN (PH.D. IN EDUCATION). HE ALSO ATTENDED A MONTH-LONG POST GRADUATE SESSION AT PENN STATE IN 1957. OTHER EDUCATION INCLUDES ATTENDANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA (1951-54 (BA IN ENGLISH, 1954) AND LIBERIA COLLEGE, 1947-50 (HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE, 1950).

5. MORRIS IS 5'3" AND HEAVY (170-PLUS LBS). SEVERAL OF HIS ARTICLES ON EDUCATION IN LIBERIA HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN UN PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS. HE IS KNOWN TO ENJOY READING, MOVIES AND SPECTATOR SPORTS. IN THE PAST, MORRIS HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE YMCA, THE AMERICAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION), U.S. A., AND THE NATIONAL TEACHER ASSOCIATION OF LIBERIA. HE HAS ALSO SERVED AS SECRETARY OF THE MONTERRADO COUNTY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION. HE IS MARRIED.
HORAN

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